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MEDIA RELEASE

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UNIVERSITY COURSES TO BE TAUGHT ON YUCATAN COAST JAN. 4-14

MISSOULA--

The Yucatan Coast and Caribbean island of Cozumel, Mexico, will be the sites of two University of Montana field short courses in tropical ecology from January 4-14.

The courses, open to any interested persons, will be offered by the UM Biological Station and Center for Continuing Education and Summer Programs.

Dr. Jack A Stanford, director of the Biological Station, will teach the field courses during the eight-day trip in Mexico. Students will scuba dive and snorkel with Stanford on the Palancar and Santa Rosa reefs offshore Cozumel and tour rain forests and beach communities along the mainland from Puerto Morelos to the ancient Mayan city of Tulum.

The courses are titled "Ecology of Caribbean Coral Reefs" and "Ecology of the Yucatan Coast." Each carries two UM credits or may be audited by anyone interested in visiting a unique area of the world in a scholarly fashion.

Subjects will include the formation and maintenance of coral reefs and introduction to the interactions of plants and animals living on the reefs. Observation of color patterns and behavior of reef fishes will be emphasized.

Students also will learn the major plant species and associated fauna in Yucatan rain forests and will observe how these communities have been naturally influenced by hurricanes and Mayan agriculture.

Group airfares from Missoula have been arranged to limit costs. For more information, interested persons should contact the Biological Station at

406-982-3301.

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